

September 26, 2002

Hon. Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I wish to thank you for alerting me to the issuance of President Bush's Executive Order on Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews. I believe that this new initiative will help to expedite the delivery of needed transportation improvements in an environmentally sound manner.

Of special interest to the State of Connecticut, and to me personally, is the provision for developing a listing of high priority projects, and the formation of the executive level interagency task force to monitor progress on those projects. In Connecticut, we have two projects that I feel would benefit from inclusion on the priority list. One is Route 11 in the southeastern portion of the state. Its completion will provide a needed link between the Capitol area and the growing urbanized areas along the coast. The other candidate is the construction of the Route 6 freeway in eastern Connecticut. It has a long history and has made the national news repeatedly when roads with high fatality rates are discussed.

Both projects would be constructed on new alignments and as such, would impact natural resources and, thus, require significant mitigation. Because of this, they have received extensive consideration from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service, and must gain Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits. I feel that the potential exists, in both of these corridors, to deliver needed highway improvements in concert with appropriate environmental stewardship and enhancement elements. However, to accomplish this, a true team effort, by all agencies involved, is necessary. The approach outlined in the Executive Order offers such an avenue to collaborative success.

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Again, I applaud the President's action and appreciate your consideration of these important projects as candidates for designation as high priority projects. If you wish to discuss this matter in more depth, feel free to contact me, or call Acting Transportation Commissioner James F. Byrnes at (860) 594-3000.

Sincerely,

JOHN G. ROWLAND
Governor